



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHANTEL ELDER

# **Cultivator to the stars**

"It's exciting!" said cannabis cultivator
Michael Hicks, owner of Woodland Roots and
Yolo Family Farms. He's proud to be showing
samples of his best-ever harvest in 16 years
of farming. "There are so many people now,
from so many different fields, wanting to be
part of cannabis."

An organic outdoor cannabis grower who operates in legal compliance, the 37-year-old Woodland native first learned his craft in the cannabis-rich Humboldt scene while attending College of the Redwoods in the early 2000s. After moving back to the Central Valley, Hicks became a medical cannabis manager at Sacramento's A Therapeutic Alternative dispensary until starting his farms in 2003. Still committed to serving medical users, Hicks cited "that feeling you get" when helping patients as his chief motivation for moving from the retail dispensary into cultivation.

Hicks is also excited about supplying cannabis flower for Australian actor Jason Gann's soon-to-be-released packages of "Wilfred" brand pre-rolls. Based on Gann's character from the *Wilfred* TV series about an imaginary pot-smoking dog, strains from Yolo Family Farms will be featured in Wilfred's sativa, indica and hybrid packs.

#### Tell us about the Wilfred pre-rolls.

We are currently the outdoor, sun-grown flower that is found in [Jason Gann's] pre-rolls. His plan is to use outdoor flower only and to look to us and Yolo County for his needs.

## Is Northern California cannabis as good as its wines?

Yes, 100 percent. California has been known for years as having the best cannabis, and I think in the long run we will take over the world.

#### What will you plant this spring?

Our auto-flower run is next. These are CBD seeds that have *Cannabis ruderalis* in them, so they flower automatically. They will only grow to 2 or 3 feet tall, because of the time of year. It gives us a short [growing] season that we can put in right before the last summer seeding.

#### What are your best recreational strains?

It's rare for this to happen, but our Blue Cookies is testing at 31 percent and our Holy Grail was at 29 percent on the final certificate of analysis.

## Does growing cannabis make any money these days?

It's difficult. People think we're rich. All of our money goes back into the two companies to regrow them. Now that it's legal, we have an obligation to future generations to do it in the most sensible way for the environment. So there is very little after taxes and compliance fees. In the long run, I think we can achieve it.

## Is falling out of compliance your biggest worry?

What I'm more worried about is consistency of labs, why we're not seeing consistent data coming back from lab tests. If I'm seeing such inconsistent testing, I don't know what the state's getting out of it. We need more standardization in testing.

## What is the funniest thing to happen on the farm?

Watching cameras with a whole bunch of coyotes in our garden, and having to go clear them out. The security part is some of the funniest, because we're learning what types of animals come out late at night, like coyotes. Deer is common, rabbits and field mice, scorpions and owls.

### Are they after the cannabis?

Not really. They just tend to pass through, usually about 3 or 4 in the morning.

Visit wilfredcannabis.com for more information about the Yolo Family Farms-supplied pre-rolls.